

## Historic Cilcain, Leete, Loggerheads, Brithdir

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### Route Summary

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Although a little longer than some of the Cilcain Walks, you are rewarded with historic interest and great beauty. The leete, once a hive of industrial activity is probably at its best in the autumn. (NB Loggerheads Park gets very busy at weekends).

### Route Overview

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Category: Walking

Length: 11.960 km / 7.48 mi

Last Modified: 28th August 2020

Difficulty: Medium

Rating: Unrated

Surface: Moderate

Date Published: 10th August 2020

### Description

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**Although a little longer than some of the Cilcain Walks, you are rewarded with historic interest and great beauty.**

From the White Horse Inn in Cilcain, turn right at the crossroads in the centre of the village and walk down Pentre Hill until you see a white bungalow (Hillside) on your right. Enter the Millennium Woods (Coed y Felin) on the left opposite the bungalow. Take the path into the woods forking right after about 75 yards. Carry on until you see a fence with a gap in it. Go through the gap turning right and dropping down to a stream, Nant Gain.

Cross the footbridge over the stream with the ruins of Cilcain Mill in front of you.



You can see a large millstone to the left of the path in front of the ruin. As you return to the path and start to climb, you can see a large diameter pipe in the bank on the right hand side. This would have been supplying water to the mill's water wheel. The mill pond would have been behind this pipe. See if you can work out where the mill wheel would have been?

Walk on up "Mill Lane." Turn left onto the road for a few minutes before taking the second track, turning left again towards a white bungalow. Follow the track past two stone cottages, cross a stile and walk down the side of the field to a gate on the right. Pass through the gate and after 15 yards go left down the field to another stile. Cross a footbridge over the river Alyn, and then climb the short but steep path to join the leete, turning right.

The Leete Path follows a 6ft wide leete that was constructed on land owned by the Grosvenor family in the 1820s to divert water from Loggerheads to power the lead mining activity downstream. The river is full of sink holes into which water is lost, leaving the river dry in summer. This leete was built by the Mold Mines Company to service waterwheels that powered mining machinery and water pumps lower in the valley. There are other leetes in the Alyn Valley dating back to 1757.

As you walk along the leete you will pass Devil's Gorge where you may see climbers ascending the sheer rock faces.



You can go down into the Gorge and approach the mine workings entrance if you wish. If you are very adventurous you may wish to bring a torch. Further along leete you will see entrances to other mine workings but these are not considered safe to enter.

As you approach Loggerheads you will see more signs of industrial activity alongside the river dating back over 100 years. Loggerheads was a major centre for lead mining for several hundred years up to the late 1800's when the mines finally closed. Trucks, like those behind the Old Mill, were used to take lead ore to the crushers and smelters or to transport waste. They ran on rails, pulled by horses.

The stone structure beside the river, by the footbridge, housed a 40ftx6ft waterwheel installed in 1870 for the Glan-Alyn Mine. A few paces back, on the opposite (east) side of the path, you may have spotted the remains of another waterwheel installed in 1724.



Continue along the Leete path and cross the stone footbridge into Loggerheads Park. On the right you will pass a working flour mill (though I don't think they actually make flour here these days).



There are toilets, a cafe and a tourist information centre.

Exit the park through the car parks, turning right onto a minor road for a few minutes. At the T junction turn right and as the road dips down pass through a gate and take the track on your left. Pass an abandoned sub station and look for a waterwheel on your right generating electricity for the nearby house, Brynteg. Carry on along this track passing two abandoned holiday caravans, and a recently restored cottage (Cwm-bach) on your left as you cross a field heading for a stile. Cross the stile and turn right along the level path.

Follow the route crossing a stream into a field. On the far side of the field cross another stream (Aber Eilun) and join a track. This part can be quite muddy. Cross a third stream taking care to avoid the wildlife.



Pass through the gate and look out for Brithdir Mawr on your right. The house has changed little since it was built in the 16th century, and is one of the area's oldest houses. Listed Grade II as "an important sub-medieval minor gentry house."

Production of the film "Hilary and Jackie" used this location in 1998, starring Emily Watson and Rachel Griffiths as the British classical musician sisters Jacqueline du Pré (cello) and Hilary du Pré (flute). You can see it on Amazon Prime.



A few minutes later you will see a white house on your left (Bryn Ffynnon). Take the track to the left alongside this house. Follow this track passing a barn and house (Tan-y-Ffrith) on the right and then Castell, a white cottage on your left where the track becomes a path. Cross a boardwalk over a swampy stretch of the path, go through a gate and then down a track to another gate. Go through the gate and look out for a track on your left. Opposite the track take a

stile on your right towards the old Cilcain Water Works.



Take the road to the left for the last 1/2 mile back to Cilcain Village centre.

All proceeds from the sale of my walks (most cost 50p) goes to Nightingale House Hospice. I highly recommend installing Viewranger on your phone so that you always know precisely where you are on these routes. Thanks for looking.

## Waypoints

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### Devil's Gorge WP0004

(53.17016; -3.21502)

Devil's Gorge

### Cafe

(53.15465; -3.20027)

Cafe

### WP0025

(53.15436; -3.20246)

Pay car park

### Stile WP0039

(53.15240; -3.22536)

Turn right at stile

### Stream WP0043

(53.15416; -3.23610)

Cross the stream

### Stream WP0046

(53.15808; -3.23450)

Cross the stream.



### Brithdir Mawr WP0050

(53.15746; -3.23001)

Brithdir Mawr historic house



### Cilcain Water Works WP0070

(53.17343; -3.24056)

Cilcain Water Works

### Old Cilcain Mill WP0077

(53.17471; -3.23054)

The derelict Old Cilcain Mill



### stile

(53.17196; -3.21611)

stile

